MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff

News Release
For Immediate Release
October 22, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 & (701) 595-3596

Pictures available at: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzEKNLJqG3cwNnJBRzNQQ2hOQWc

Officers Arrest 80+ for Engaging in a Riot at DAPL Construction Site

Mandan, N.D. – Law enforcement arrested 83 individuals for riot activities Saturday morning at a Dakota Access Pipeline construction site. The Morton County Sheriff's Department was alerted to the criminal acts around 5:00 a.m. Authorities located an older style SUV parked on private property in the pipeline right-of-way area near construction equipment, with flat tires. Four individuals were attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete. Officers worked to remove the individuals from the vehicle, once released they were arrested.

At around 7:30 a.m. approximately 300+ protesters trespassed three miles onto private property, following the pipeline right of way, west of Highway 1806. Law enforcement formed a line between protesters and where DAPL construction equipment was parked. During that time, a group of protesters attempted to breach the police line and did not follow officer's instructions. As a result officers utilized pepper spray to protect themselves, other officers and to control the protesters. One protester charged at an officer on the line, tried to grab the officers' canister of pepper spray, and was responsible for the officer getting sprayed in the face – blinding him for five minutes. Other officers were able to secure that protester and arrest him.

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The confrontation occurred and over the course of five hours. In which 83 protesters were arrested for various crimes including: assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, criminal trespass, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot. In addition, two officers received minor injuries during the event.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful. It was obvious to our officers who responded that the protesters engaged in escalated unlawful tactics and behavior during this event. This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. "I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protestors. This is about the rule of law."

Due to numerous vehicles and people along the roadway, authorities closed Highway 1806 at 8:00 a.m. The roadway was shut down north at Hwy 1806 & CR 138 and to the south at Hwy 1806 & Hwy 24, south of Cannonball. It was reopened at 1:30 p.m.

"Law enforcement was able to safely address this situation because of the assistance Morton County has received from numerous agencies. To date, we have received assistance from more than 900 individuals from 17 counties, 12 cities, various state agencies and officers from Wyoming and South Dakota. I want to take this time to thank all the local and state agencies who have assisted Morton County during our time of need. It is because of this assistance we are able to respond as necessary to these large and volatile protests."

The incident remains under investigation.

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